

SERMON OUTLINE James 1:19-27

True Religion and Orphan Care

THE CALL TO TRUE RELIGION – V22 (BE DOERS AND NOT HEARERS ONLY)

THE REVEALING OF EMPTY RELIGION – V26 (BEHAVIOR DOESN'T CORROBORATE STATED BELIEFS)

THE DEFINITION OF TRUE RELIGION – V27 (ACTIONS AND BEHAVIOR THAT FLOW FROM INFORMED OBEDIENCE)

THE RESULTS OF TRUE RELIGION – V27 (JOYFULLY SATISFYING SELF-SACRIFICES WITHOUT SELF-INTEREST)

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

MAIN POINT

The big idea of this passage: The only correct response to truth received is truth applied. We can therefore test ourselves to prove the genuineness of our profession of faith by the works we do. Since all things can only self-replicate, those born of God's Spirit must produce fruits of the Spirit. Without these results our "religion" is worthless.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were your thoughts on the text/sermon? What most stood out? How was it helpful? Confusing?
2. What do you think of the passage's definition of true religion?
3. What is the greatest proof that the gospel we proclaim is true? What common accusations are leveled against Christians?
4. If you had to prove you believe what you say you believe (that your religion is true) what evidence would you give? James 1:26.
5. Do your priorities in life (the way you spend your time, money, talent, and where you seek enjoyment) support your profession of faith or contradict it? If your priorities do contradict your stated belief, what should you do about it?
6. What measurement does Jesus give us to show we love him? Where do I measure according to this standard?
7. Where are you ministering already without self-interest but out of joyful gratitude to Jesus?
8. Where are you unwilling to sacrifice what is required to minister to a need that love assumes we should meet?
9. What things are hindering you from doing what love requires? How can followers of Jesus overcome these hinderances?
10. In what way/s did the sermon help you see the greatness of God?

AREAS OF APPLICATION

11. Find one specific way to begin ministering to the orphan, widow, or needy person right now.
12. Talk to your elders about needy people in your own church.
13. If possible, research foster-care in your own community, pray for a willing heart and ability from God if this is a ministry He's called you to do, and ask your elders for guidance in pursuing this ministry.
14. Think through your budget and consider your perspective on it in light of self-sacrifice. Do you give a certain obligatory amount or do you joyfully live with much less than you could because you value God's kingdom, not self-indulgence in this life?
15. Consider how you spend your disposable time (social schedule/kid's sports/extracurriculars). If you fill your life with things that make you too busy to be able to meet ministry opportunities, consider what sacrifice you need to make.
16. Pick one specific thing you mean to do differently, with the Spirit's help, as a result of the things you heard in this text/sermon.

PRAYER POINTS

17. Adoration. Praise God for defining true religion through the life example of His Son Jesus Christ. Praise Him that we have this mind in ourselves, which is a believer's possession through Jesus Christ. Praise Him for showing us through Jesus that the pattern of Christian living is submissive obedience before glory.
18. Confess. Confess where you have limited what you will give in your life because of selfishness rather than selflessness. Confess where you have talked a perfectly informed talk without actually applying what you know. Confess where you failed to control your words, or let the orphan go hungry, or corrupted the standard of sacrifice given out of reverent obedience.
19. Thanksgiving. Thank God for first loving us. Thank God for not sparing His own Son, and graciously giving us with Him all things. Thank Him for Jesus' self-sacrifice demonstrating what the greatest love is. Thank Him that you are more selfless.
20. Supplication. Ask God to grow your knowledge and love for him in corresponding ways. Ask that the whole world would be able to see that we are truly his disciples by the love we have for each other. Ask God that the proof of the gospel would be demonstrated by His genuine love flowing through his in our words and behavior.